



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/720,066	11/25/2003	Christoph Klukowski	2003_1554A	4200

513 7590 04/04/2007
WENDEROTH, LIND & PONACK, L.L.P.
2033 K STREET N. W.
SUITE 800
WASHINGTON, DC 20006-1021

EXAMINER

BOES, TERENCE

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

3682

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	04/04/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/720,066	KLUKOWSKI ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Terence Boes	3682	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01/17/2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 29-56 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 37-40, 42-49 and 54 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 29-36, 41, 50-53, 55 and 56 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>01/17/2007</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

1. Claims 29-36, 41, 50-53, 55 and 56 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 1, line 25 recites "...when said steering column is deformed...", rendering the claim indefinite. Use of the term "when" renders the claim unclear. The term "when" presumes an action (i.e. deformation of a steering column) to take place but no where previously in the claim is such action said to actually occur, or will occur. What structure allows for this function?

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 29-36, 41, 50-53, and 55, as best understood, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Manwaring et al. US 6,419,269.

Manwaring et al. disclose:

- a steering spindle (22);
- a shell unit housing said steering spindle (28);

Art Unit: 3682

- a console unit (see figure 3) having at least one side wall (40, 46) which extends in a lateral direction along said shell unit, said shell unit being supported by said at least one side wall (see figure 1), said console unit being fixed to a chassis (C3/L25-35);
- a securement device (54, 94, 92, 110, 56, 86, 82, 84) operable between an engaged state and a disengaged state,
- said securement device including a plurality of securing elements (54, 94, 92, 110, 56, 86, 82, 84),
- a tension bolt (54) penetrating openings in said shell unit and in said at least one side wall (see figure 2), wherein said shell unit, said console unit, said plurality of securing elements and said tension bolt have a structure and are arranged such that when said securement device is in said engaged state, said shell unit is unadjustably coupled with said console unit by said securing elements engaging one another, and when said securement device is in said disengaged state, said shell unit is adjustable relative to said console unit in at least one adjustment direction (C4/L53-55),
- tilting part (82) supported so as to be displaceable relative to a first one of said shell unit and said at least one side wall in one of said at least one adjustment direction, and so as to be nondisplaceable relative to a second one of said shell unit and said at least one side wall in said one of said at

least one adjustment direction (tilting part can be displaceable or nondisplaceable depending on position of tension bolt 54),

- wherein one of (a) said tilting part and (b) said first one of said shell unit and said at least one side wall includes clamping edges (edges and faces of 86 and two opposing protrusions), and the other of (a) said tilting part and (b) said first one of said shell unit and said at least one side wall includes clamping faces (see fig. 2, 88, 48)
- wherein said shell unit, said console unit and said tilting part have a structure and are arranged such that when said steering column is deformed in said one of said at least one adjustment direction, said tilting part is torqued by said second one of said shell unit and said at least one side wall relative to said first one of said shell unit and said at least one side wall such that said clamping edges dig into said clamping faces so as to inhibit a displacement of said tilting part in said one of said at least one adjustment direction (as best understood, C4/L1-10, furthermore, while features of an apparatus may be recited either structurally or functionally, claims directed to >an< apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function. Therefore, claim 29 is rejected since all claim limitations have been met as disclosed above (see MPEP 2114).
- wherein said tilting part and said second one of said shell unit and said at least one side wall are connected via at least one engagement element

Art Unit: 3682

(86 and two opposing protrusions) and at least two engagement points spaced apart from one another.

- wherein said tilting part includes said clamping edges (edges of 82 and two opposed protrusions), and said first one of said shell unit and said at least one side wall includes said clamping faces (front face of 42, see fig. 2).
- wherein said one of said at least one adjustment direction is a height direction perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of said steering column (see vertical slot 42 oriented vertically).
- wherein said at least one adjustment direction in which said shell unit is adjustable relative to said console unit includes an axial direction of said steering column and a height direction perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of said steering column (see axial slot 34 in fig. 2).
- wherein said tilting part is supported so as to be nondisplaceable relative to said second one of said shell unit and said at least one side wall in one of said axial direction and said height direction, and so as to be displaceable relative to said second one of said shell unit and said at least one side wall in the other of said axial direction and said height direction (tilting part can be displaceable or nondisplaceable in height and axial directions).
- wherein said tilting part is supported so as to be nondisplaceable relative to said shell unit in a height direction perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of

said steering column, and so as to be displaceable relative to said at least one side wall in said height direction (tilting part can be displaceable or nondisplaceable in height and axial directions).

- wherein said tilting part has a central opening which is penetrated by said tension bolt (see figure 2).
- wherein said tilting part is positioned at a surface of one of said at least one side wall facing away from said shell unit (see figures 2 and 4-6).
- wherein said tilting part further comprises: engagement elements positioned at two opposite sides of said one of said at least one side wall in an axial direction of said steering column, said engagement elements extending from said tilting part toward said shell unit, wherein said engagement elements overlap at least an edge of said shell unit extending in said axial direction, and/or engage at least one guidance slot in said shell unit extending in said axial direction (see figure 2, C4/L1-10).
- wherein said tilting part further comprises: tilting ledges (160, 162) overlapping said sides of said one of said at least one side wall, said engagement elements being positioned on said tilting ledges, wherein said tilting ledges comprise said clamping edges, and wherein said sides of said one of said at least one side wall comprise said clamping faces (see figure 2, C4/L1-10).
- wherein said console unit comprises two side walls (46, 40), said shell unit being positioned between said two side walls (see figures 1 and 2).

Art Unit: 3682

- wherein said tension bolt penetrates openings in both of said side walls (see figure 2).
- a tensioning device (56) for mutually engaging said securing elements, said tensioning device being actuatable by a tension lever (56 is capable of being actuated by a tension lever i.e. a wrench).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claim 56, as best understood, is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Manwaring et al. US 6,419,269 in view of Turner et al. GB 2 092 967.

Manwaring et al. disclose all of the claimed subject matter as described above. Manwaring et al. do not disclose a first plurality of plates connected with said shell unit; and a second plurality of plates connected with said console unit, said plates of said first and second plurality of plates having friction faces and being interdigitated with each other.

Turner et al. teach a first plurality of plates (21a, 22a) connected with said shell unit; and a second plurality of plates (21b, 22b) connected with said console unit, said plates of said first and second plurality of plates having friction faces (Pg 2/C1/L50-65) and being interdigitated with each other for the purpose of increasing the holding frictional force to prevent a driver from moving a steering column (Pg 2/C1/L50-65).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the teachings of Manwaring et al. and provide a first plurality of plates connected with said shell unit; and a second plurality of plates connected with said console unit, said plates of said first and second plurality of plates having friction faces and being interdigitated with each other, as taught by Turner et al., for the purpose of increasing the holding frictional force to prevent a driver from moving a steering column.

Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments with respect to Lutz '012, claims 29-56 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.
5. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 29-56 have been considered but are not persuasive.

Applicant argues "Manwaring does not disclose a tilting part having a structure such that when the steering column is deformed in an adjustment direction, the tilting part is torqued such that clamping edge dig into clamping faces so as to inhibit a displacement of the tilting part in the adjustment direction, as required by independent claim 29".

In response, while features of an apparatus may be recited either structurally or functionally, claims directed to >an< apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function. Therefore, claim 29 is rejected since all claim limitations have been met as disclosed above (see MPEP 2114).

Art Unit: 3682

Furthermore, Manwaring discloses a tilting part (82) having a structure such that when the steering column is deformed in an adjustment direction, the tilting part is torqued such that clamping edge dig into clamping faces so as to inhibit a displacement of the tilting part in the adjustment direction, as required by independent claim 29 (see figures 2, and 4-6, C4/L1-10).

Furthermore, the recitation "...when said steering column is deformed...", renders the claim indefinite. Use of the term "when" renders the claim unclear. The term "when" presumes an action (i.e. deformation of a steering column) to take place but no where previously in the claim is such action said to actually occur, or will occur.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

Art Unit: 3682


the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Terence Boes whose telephone number is (571) 272-4898. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Richard Ridley can be reached on (571) 272-6917. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

TB
TB
3/26/07


RICHARD RIDLEY
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER